Ohio | Environmental Protection Agency

John R. Kasich, Governor
Mary Taylor, Lt. Governor
Scott J. Nally, Director

January 18, 2011

Notice of Issuance of a Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact to All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies

Baldwin Creek Dams Removal
WR391505-0002

The purpose of this notice is to advise the public that Ohio EPA has reviewed the referenced project and finds neither an Environmental Assessment (EA) nor a Supplemental Study (SS) is required to implement the project as discussed in the attached Limited Environmental Review (LER). Therefore, a Finding of No Significant Impact is being issued for this project.

The Water Pollution Control Loan Fund program requires the inclusion of environmental factors in the decision-making process for project approval. Ohio EPA has done this by incorporating a detailed analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed action in its review and approval process. Environmental information was developed as part of the facilities plan, as well as through the facilities plan review process. A subsequent review by this Agency has found that the proposed action does not require the preparation of either an EA or an SS.

Our environmental review concluded that because the proposed project is limited in scope and meets all applicable criteria, a Limited Environmental Review is warranted. Specifically, the proposed removal of dams is a nonpoint source pollution control project consisting of non-structural practices that qualifies for a LER and meets the following additional criteria for a LER:

The proposed project:
– has no significant environmental effect;
– does not require extensive specific impact mitigation;
– has no effect on high value environmental resources;
– has a reasonable cost;
– is not a controversial action;
– does not create a new, or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters;
– will not result in substantial increases in the volume of discharge or the loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters; and
– will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population.

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The LER presents additional information on the proposed project, costs, and basis for our decision. Further information can be obtained by calling or writing the contact person named at the end of the LER.

Upon issuance of this determination, loan award may proceed without being subject to further environmental review or public comment, unless information is provided which determines that environmental conditions on the proposed project have changed significantly.

Sincerely,

Gregory H. Smith, Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

GHS/DH
c: NEDO-DSW
Sue Farmer, OWDA
File (2)

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A. Project Identification

Project Name:	Baldwin Creek Dams Removal
WPCLF#:	WR391505-0002
Sponsor:	Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District 3900 Euclid Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44115
Owner / Implementer:	City of Berea 11 Berea Commons Berea, OH 44017

B. History and Existing Conditions

Baldwin Creek, a tributary of the Rocky River, runs through urbanized western Cuyahoga County. Baldwin Creek was significantly altered in the 20th century, being re-routed for mineral extraction and construction, and being dammed for grade control. The multiple channel modifications created poor aquatic habitat and interfere with fish passage. The physical limitations prevent the stream from achieving its Ohio Water Quality Standards Aquatic Life Use designation, Warmwater Habitat (WWH).

The City of Berea, with the assistance of the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD), proposes to remove one intact dam and two partially-intact dams that serve as barriers to fish passage in Baldwin Creek and that sever populations of the state-threatened Bigmouth Shiner (*Notropis dorsalis*) in Baldwin Creek and the East Branch of the Rocky River. Channel stabilization upstream and downstream of the dam sites and aquatic habitat enhancement are included in the project. As identified in the approved Rocky River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report and the endorsed Rocky River Watershed Action Plan, dam removal and in-stream habitat restoration will restore the fish community to WWH standards in the lower 0.9 miles of Baldwin Creek. The main goals of this project include restored fish passage, improved fish in-stream habitat, reduced channel and bank erosion, and improved water quality.

NEORSD is providing approximately $343,000 of the $489,000 project cost through the Ohio Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP) as part of its construction loan from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for the Euclid Creek Storage Tunnel. The remaining funding is a grant of approximately $146,000 from the Ohio Surface Water Improvement Fund (SWIF).

C. Project Description

The project will restore the lower 0.9 miles of Baldwin Creek by removing three small low-head dams, restoring 4,750 linear feet of natural flow conditions, and installation of natural boulder and stone step / pool and crossvane structures downstream of the removed dams for grade control and habitat (Figure 1). Final engineering design will be completed in 2011.

The dams are owned by the City of Berea and are on city land. An environmental covenant restricting future land use will be placed on city land in the immediate project area to ensure the perpetual protection of the restored stream. Cleveland Metroparks owns land through which Baldwin Creek runs, which also will protect the restored stream.

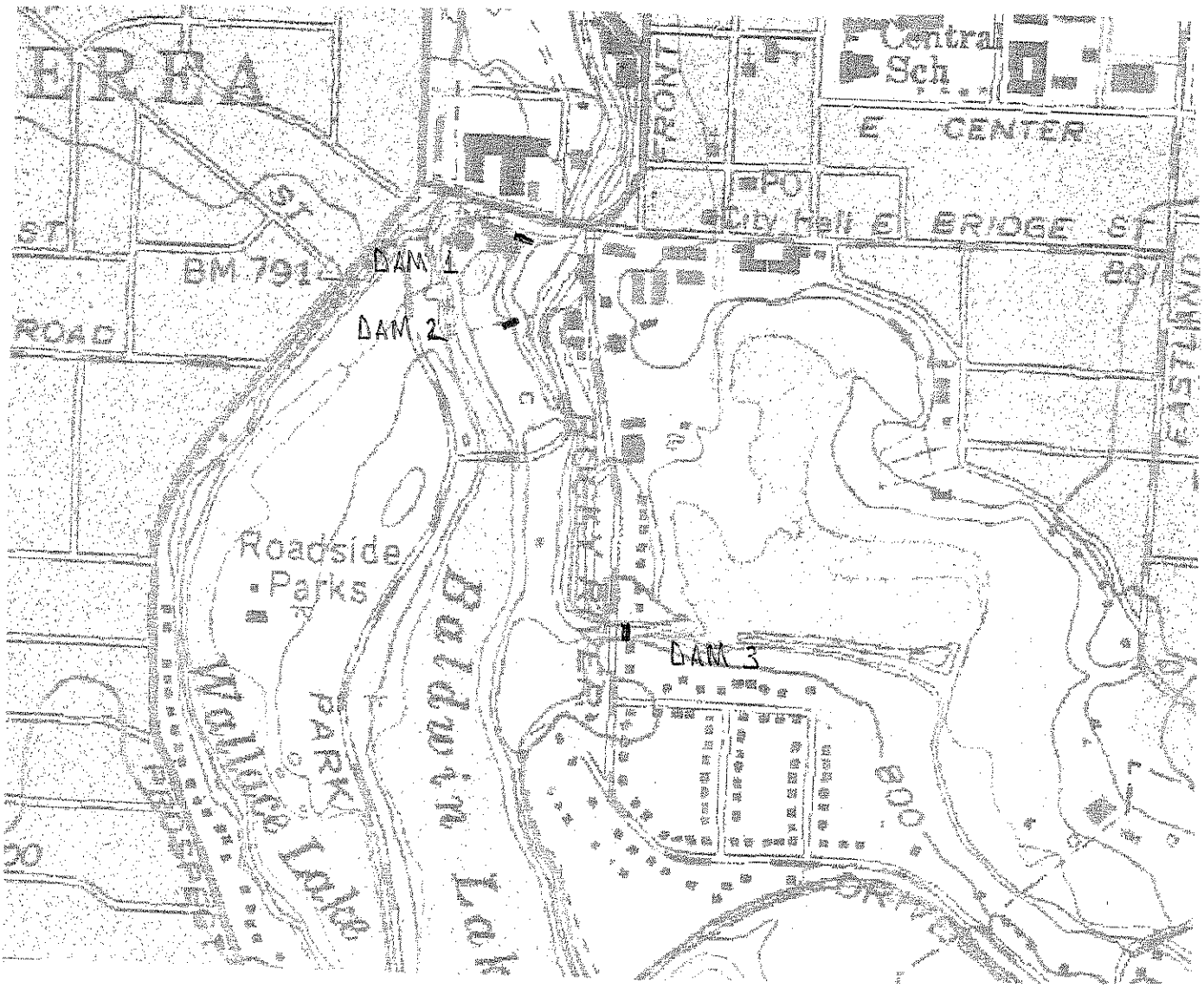

Figure 1 – Project Location

D. Estimated Project Costs

The Baldwin Creek Dams Removal project cost estimate is $489,000, with $146,000 from an Ohio Surface Water Improvement Fund (SWIF) grant and $343,000 from the Ohio Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP) provided as part of NEORSD's $31,000,000 construction loan from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for the Euclid Creek Storage Tunnel (ECT). The ECT total construction cost is $189,643,000.

NEORSD anticipates a WPCLF loan in February 2011 to partially fund the proposed ECT. NEORSD qualifies for the standard below-market interest rate, which for January 2011 is 3.71% for a 20-year loan; the rate is set monthly and may change for a February loan. Interest on that loan will enable sponsorship of eight WRRSP projects, in exchange for which NEORSD will receive an interest rate reduction of 0.1%. More information on the ECT project is available from the contact named at the end of this document.

E. Project Schedule

Assuming February loan award for the NEORSD project, funding for engineering design and federal permitting for the dam removals will be available in March. The project schedule anticipates completing design and permitting in late 2011 followed by construction. In-stream work will be completed in early 2012 and streambank restoration and revegetation will be completed by mid-2012.

F. Public Notification

This project is part of ongoing improvements to the greater Rocky River watershed coordinated by the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District based on the state endorsed Rocky River Watershed Action Plan. Information about this project has been available to the public through the Rocky River Watershed Council newsletter and webpage and the City of Berea webpage. The project activity schedule envisions additional public outreach during the engineering design stage. Ohio EPA is unaware of opposition to or controversy about the project.

The Ohio EPA is sending this Limited Environmental Review (LER) decision and Finding of No Significant Impact to interested parties. Information supporting the LER is available from the project contact named below.

G. Planning Information

The proposed project was reviewed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio Historic Preservation Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Ohio EPA. None of the agencies opposes the project.

H. Conclusion

The proposed removal of dams is a nonpoint source pollution control project consisting of non-structural practices that qualifies for a LER and meets the following additional criteria for a LER:

It has no significant environmental effect; it has no effect on high value environmental resources; and does not require extensive specific impact mitigation – The removal of three small dams and associated streambed and streambank restoration and habitat enhancement will require limited disturbance to the streambed and streambanks. Disturbance will be minimized through construction best management practices, and in-water work will be coordinated with the Ohio Division of Wildlife to minimize potential impacts to spawning fish.

The cost is reasonable – The cost is comparable to the cost of similar stream restoration projects.

The project is not a controversial action - Ohio EPA is unaware of controversy about the project that will eliminate two partially-breached small dams and one intact dam that pools water in an artificial channel.

It does not create a new, or relocate an existing, discharge to surface or ground waters; it will not result in substantial increases in the volume of discharge or the loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters; and it will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population – Restoration of Baldwin Creek in the project area will have no effect on wastewater discharge locations, volume, or conveyance or treatment capacity.

The planning activities for the project have identified no potentially significant adverse impacts. The project is expected to have no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment or on sensitive resources (floodplains, wetlands, prime or unique agricultural lands, aquifer recharge zones, archaeologically or historically significant sites, or threatened or endangered species).

The project will re-establish aquatic habitat in lower Baldwin Creek that will allow the stream to achieve its Warmwater Habitat criteria.

I. For further information, please contact:

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